Upkeep of link road connecting NH 8 and 11

†2308. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the link road connecting the National Highway No. 8 and 11 has been converted into pucca road in Ringus in Shahpura *via* Nathusar with central assistance;

(b) if so, what is the present condition of this link road;

(c) the authority responsible for its maintenance if the condition thereof is dilapidated;

(d) whether the Centre is considering to get it repaired on its own expenses; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR): (a) to (e) No, Sir. The Government of Rajasthan have reported that it is already a pucca road constructed out of State funds and that the condition of the road is satisfactory except in a stretch of 8 kms, in which renewal work is in progress.

The responsibility for maintenance of this road is of the Public Works Department, Government of Rajasthan. Besides, repair of roads is not envisaged under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana.

Connecting rural masses through Wireless Wide Area Network

2309. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to deploy Wireless Wide Area Network connectivity for the use of rural masses;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the utility and benefits of such technology for rural populace has been assessed;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(e) time by which such facility will be made available?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ANNASAHEB M.K. PATIL): (a) to (e) A proposal for extension of Computerisation and Telephony Services to Villages is under consideration in the Ministry of Rural Development. A Task Force and a Steering Group have been constituted to go into all aspects of the proposal. Reports of the Task Force and the Steering Group are awaited.

Study on watershed projects in Andhra Pradesh

2310. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry of Rural Development had sponsored an evaluation study on watershed projects in Andhra Pradesh by Agricultural Finance Corporation;

(b) if so, the findings/recommendations of the study;

(c) whether Government proposes to sanction more projects for Andhra Pradesh in the light of findings of the study; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ANNASAHEB M.K. PATIL): (a) A quick evaluation study of the watershed projects in the country including Andhra Pradesh was undertaken during 1999-2000 through the Agricultural Finance Corporation, New Delhi.

(b) The Study had covered the implementation of watershed projects in 17 Districts under Integrated Waterlands Development Programme (IWDP), in 11 Districts under Drought-Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and in 1 District under Desert Development Programme (DDP) during the years 1995-98. These projects covered a total area of 15.10 lakh ha. *i.e.* 12.52 lakh ha. under DPAP, 1.51 lakh ha. under DDP and 1.07 lakh ha. under IWDP. The Study found that an amount of Rs. 141.44 crores had been incurred under the three Programmes on major activities such as soil conservation, farm ponds, percolation tanks, horticulture, pasture development, afforestation, plantation of timber & fuel wood etc.